

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## **President Obama: Asia-Pacific Will Shape U.S. Economic Future**

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama concluded the 2011 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' Meeting in Hawaii, saying that it was a chance to lead the Pacific Rim economies toward a seamless regional economy with more trade, more exports and more jobs.

"No region will do more to shape our long-term economic future than the Asia-Pacific region," Obama said.

"And since this is the world's fastest-growing region, the Asia-Pacific is key to achieving my goal of doubling U.S. exports — a goal ... which we are on track right now to meet," Obama said. The president set a goal of doubling U.S. exports by 2015 as part of a broad effort to rebalance the American economy, which is heavily dependent on consumer spending.

Obama, in his home state, hosted the APEC Leaders' Meeting November 12-13. It brought together 21 economies from across the Pacific Rim, from Chile to China, to discuss economic growth, financial reform, trade and commerce concerns, and ultimately strengthening regional economic integration.

The Asia-Pacific region is a crucial economic link for the United States. APEC's 21 member economies make up a market of 2.7 billion consumers, account for 44 percent of world trade, and represent 56 percent of global economic output at more than \$35.2 trillion in 2010, according to the White House. Six of the United States' 10 largest trading partners — Canada, China, Japan, South Korea, Mexico and Singapore — are in APEC.

Last year APEC economies bought 61 percent of U.S. goods exports, which amounted to \$774 billion, the White House said in a post-APEC fact sheet. In addition, APEC economies last year accounted for more than 37 percent of U.S. private services exports, which was over \$205 billion, and supported 5 million U.S. jobs.

APEC leaders agreed to three broad initiatives: increase free trade while strengthening regional economic integration, promote green growth and green jobs to enhance energy security, and promote regulatory reform to make trade and investment easier. At the core of economic integration across so wide a region is free trade, which effectively expands jobs through export industries, the president said.

"Since many of the leaders here were also at the recent [Group of 20 advanced economies] summit, we continued our efforts to get the global economy to grow faster,"

Obama said during a November 13 press briefing at the end of the two-day leaders' meetings. A day earlier Obama met with chief executive officers of businesses from across the region to emphasize the U.S. commitment to a significant expansion of engagement in what Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton called "America's Pacific Century" in a November 10 speech at the East-West Center.

Obama told reporters that the best thing the United States can do for the Pacific Rim and the global economy is to make its own economy grow faster. He said promoting jobs growth domestically will continue to be one of his major initiatives this year, which is marked by the beginning of a presidential election campaign for the November 2012 election.

"I believe that the progress we've made here will help create jobs and keep America competitive in a region that is absolutely vital not only for our economy but also for our national security," Obama said.

The president, who met with Chinese President Hu Jintao on the sidelines of the APEC meetings, said that the United States welcomes the peaceful rise of China in the region. "It is in America's interests to see China succeed in lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty," he said.

The president leaves Hawaii November 15 for meetings in Australia, where he will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the U.S.-Australia alliance. While in Canberra the president is expected to address the Australian parliament and hold talks with senior Australian leaders; he will also make a visit to Darwin. Later Obama travels to Bali in Indonesia for the annual Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) meetings and the East Asia Summit before returning to Washington on November 20. While in Indonesia, Obama will hold individual talks with the Indonesian leadership.

## **U.S. Business Leaders Say APEC Is Promoting Economic Growth**

Washington — Major U.S. corporations doing business in Asia see mutual interests arcing over the Pacific with potential for improved economic opportunity and growth for all players. That was the summary several executives gave reporters after a summit in Honolulu, Hawaii, November 12.

Bill Weldon, chief executive officer of health care and pharmaceutical company Johnson & Johnson, said he values the actions that leaders of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' Meeting organization are taking to nurture growth in transoceanic business relations.

"APEC is working toward domestic economic structures in APEC economies that are market-driven, non-discriminatory, not government directed to protectionist, and that support competition and open markets," Weldon said at the press briefing. These types of economic policies give Johnson & Johnson better opportunities to expand in Asia to offer the increasingly prosperous citizens of the region products that offer solutions to what Weldon called "non-met medical needs."

The numbers tell an important part of the story. According to APEC documents, the 21 member economies account for 44 percent of world trade and more than half of world growth domestic product in purchasing power, and are experiencing economic growth in excess of the global average.

Caterpillar Inc., the world's leading manufacturer of construction and mining equipment and other heavy machinery, showed its enthusiasm for growth in the region with an announcement of expansion, according to Rich Lavin, president of Caterpillar's construction industries and growth markets group.

"We announced a new mining facility in Batam, Indonesia, in an expansion of our existing facility outside of Jakarta," Lavin said at the press briefing. "We'll invest about \$150 million in the new facility, which is expected to be operational in 2012 for truck bodies and in 2013 for chassis." Expanding production capacity also means Caterpillar needs more workers, both internationally and at home in the United States. The company has added more than 30,000 people to its workforce since 2009, Lavin said, 12,000 in the United States and the rest abroad.

Announcements of this kind prove the point that President Obama drove home when he spoke to the business people at the APEC CEO Summit: Exports provide the greatest opportunities for U.S. economic growth as nations develop a more prosperous middle class, eager to consume U.S.-made products.

"Whether it's China, whether it's India, these emerging countries, what they're accomplishing in a few short decades — alleviating poverty, helping ordinary people all around the world get access to opportunity — that's a wonderful thing that we should be rooting for," Obama told the executives. "Those are potential customers for us in the future."

At the press briefing, Google CEO Eric Schmidt added a cautionary note about the potential for job growth. "It takes some number of years just to absorb the terrible things that occurred in 2008 because of the financial crisis," Schmidt said. "And so I'm worried that it's much longer than people are talking about."

The CEO Summit has become an annual event at the meeting at the APEC Forum, allowing business leaders in the region to engage in discussions with economic leaders, policymakers, academia and other CEOs on issues facing the region.

### **Navajo Educator Sees "Exciting Times" for American Indian Nations**

By Louise Fenner | Staff Writer

Washington — American Indian tribes are redesigning and running their own governments and economies, often with amazing success, says Manley Begay, an educator and member of the Navajo Nation.

He cites the example of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, which has numerous successful tribal enterprises, ranging from manufacturing automotive parts to making plastic utensils for fast food restaurants, from printing greeting cards to operating gambling casinos that taken together represent one of Mississippi's largest employers.

"They have a 0 percent unemployment rate," Begay said. "In fact, they have so many jobs that they import labor onto Mississippi Choctaw land. ... Out of their economic success they've been able to build state-of-the-art health facilities, schools and retirement communities for not only Choctaws but non-Choctaws as well."

In the past, "a lot of different types of policies have been initiated by the federal government to spur economic development among American Indians," Begay said. "In essence, very little has worked. When [the federal policy of] self-determination was ushered in during the Richard Nixon administration, it laid the groundwork for Indian nations beginning to develop their own economies the way they wanted."

"When you have indigenous choice in development, that really makes a big difference in how successful development is," he said.

Begay is faculty chair of the Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management and Policy at the University of Arizona in Tucson, and he teaches several courses in American Indian studies. In addition, he is co-director of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development.

He will be holding a State Department-sponsored webchat with students in Amman, Jordan, on November 22. "I'd like them to understand the current conditions in Indian Country and what the future looks like in terms of political, social and economic conditions," he said.

## INDIAN NATION-BUILDING

Begay was born in Fort Defiance, Navajo Nation (in Arizona). He has a doctorate from Harvard University. His research and consulting work focuses on promoting effective leadership in Native nations. He has dedicated his career to helping Native nations build effective institutions of governance, which he believes are the way indigenous people will be able to rebuild their societies and economies.

Self-determination for Indian tribes — tribes managing their own affairs — became the official federal policy in 1970, thanks to an executive order issued by then-President Nixon. “The federal government has had a tremendous amount of influence on the state of American Indian nations,” Begay said. “Support for the political sovereignty of tribes is critical to the development of Indian nations of the United States.”

Today, the focus is not just on Indian self-determination but on nation-building, Begay said. For centuries, Europeans and non-Native Americans have thrust their forms of government on American Indian tribes, but now “American Indian nations are asserting their right to redesign their governing systems, economic systems, and in some cases educational systems.”

“You have to couple that with building capable government institutions,” he said. “And those governing institutions must be culturally appropriate as well.”

For example, “some tribes historically had a parliamentary form of government, some have had theocracies, and some have had strong-chief-executive types of government,” he said. “Today, a lot of tribes are reformulating how they govern in a way that is much more appropriate to who they are — meaning that it’s of indigenous choice.”

“These are exciting times,” Begay said, “not unlike other places throughout the world that are going through tremendous political changes.”

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